

Design For City Newsstands Exhibition

HISTORY

In 1986, the New York City Art Commission forged a partnership between the Public Art Fund Inc. and the 14th Street-Union Square Local Development Corporation to focus their collective energies on building a better newsstand for the New York City.

According to the 14th Street-Union Square Local Development Corporation and the City's Art Commission, the design of most existing newsstands detracted from the environments in which they are situated. Concurrently, community boards had grown more vocal in their opposition to newsstands. Community leaders expressed their frustration with newsstands, claiming that the structures obstructed pedestrian traffic and that the operators had turned the newsstands into mini-department stores.

Newsstand operations are regulated by three city agencies: Department of Consumer Affairs, Department of Transportation and the City's Art Commission. Occasionally, the Landmarks Preservation Board also is involved when a newsstand is proposed for a site within an historic district or when the stand is

At the present time, newsstand licenses are issued according to guidelines drafted in 1979. With regard to design, the guidelines are vague and do not require detailed design information; hence, the prevalent design is the most efficient design: an unadorned rectangular box permitting the greatest amount of display and storage space for the vendor while providing maximum security. In most instances, the ubiquitous box does not acknowledge the architecture or other design elements within its surroundings.

Because the vendors are not motivated or compelled to create newsstands which respond to the built or natural environment, the resulting design simply adds to the visual clutter of many neighborhoods. The ad-hoc addition of sunglasses, barrettes and costume jewelry to the stands' sides does not improve the design nor does it ingratiate the operator to the neighborhood.

THE COMPETITION

Based on its history of urban design projects and its relationships with city agencies, the Public Art Fund's Project Committee accepted the challenge. Some significant questions

loomed over the design process: how do you design an aesthetically pleasing newsstand that serves the operator just as well as the standard "box" and costs the operator no more than the standard "box?" Why cannot the city enforce better design standards when private individuals are profiting from the use of public space? And, is the newsstand, as an object, too small for a collaboration? The goal was to provide well designed alternatives that were not only attractive from an aesthetic perspective, but also were attractive, in terms of profit, to the vendors.

The Public Art Fund's Project Committee called for a unique design competition. Three prototypical designs would be created by a team of artists and architects. With one unusual difference, the artist would be selected first and it would be up to the artist to select the architect(s) with whom they would work.

The design competition was juried by: Alice Aycock, artist; Dennis Adams, artist; Scott Burton, artist; Lee Weintraub, Landscape Architect; James Polshek, architect; Norm Cohen, Executive Director, 14th Street-Union Square Local Development Corporation; Joan Talbert, District Manager, 14th Street-Union Square Business Improvement District; and Susan K. Freedman, President, Public Art Fund Inc.

The jury was assisted by ex-officio members who included: Jim Heineman, representative, Councilwoman Carol Greitzer; Edward Ames, President, City Art Commission; Patti Harris, Executive Director, City Art Commission; Barbara Fife, Senior Special Assistant, Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins; John A. Knesl, representative, NYC Department of Transportation.

Three design teams were selected, each one was asked to analyze the existing conditions and then develop a prototype newsstand which would reflect the following concerns: aesthetics, cost, ease of construction, business operations, security, graffiti, visibility and lighting.

In 1989, after several reviews and revisions, the design teams presented their prototypes to the New York City Art Commission where they won praise for their innovative design solutions. Since that time, the Public Art Fund has attempted to build the prototypes for a one year test.

This introduces the another unique element in this design collaboration: the involvement of the newsstand operator. Because the city is not likely to enforce a restrictive design code, the decision to use one of these innovative designs remains with the operators; therefore, the involvement of operators was essential to the design process.

Once the newsstands had been tested by the operators, the designs were to be given over to the city's Department of Consumer Affairs to be given to applicants. The designs are to be provided for free thereby reducing the operators overall costs related to the structure.

DESIGNS FOR CITY NEWSSTANDS

Andrea Blum/Kenneth Kaplan & Ted Krueger

Our approach has been to couple electronic media with traditional print formats in a structure that respects the constraints imposed by regulations and a strict budget. This design has developed in two stages. The first isolated the newsstand operator from the news, the second has eliminated the operator altogether, thereby becoming a totally automated news station. We have pared the newsstand down to its basic function of disseminating information including a telephone booth and time/temperature as other important street concerns. Besides the selling of conventional newspapers by means of the "honor box" system, the running headlines will be electronically displayed along the top of the stand, as a means to link the news with the traffic of the street. The headlines would be communicated both in English and a second language, responsive to the cultural identity of the neighborhood in which the newsstand would be located.

A project of the Public Art Fund Inc., New York City.

This project was made possible by generous grants from the J.M. Kaplan Fund and the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Andrea Blum Kenneth Kaplan
& Ted Krueger
Designs for City Newsstands
Maquettes
A project of the Public Art Fund

Photo courtesy of design team



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3rd Floor
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Photo courtesy of design team

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BLUM/KAPLAN/KRUEGER 1988

NEWSSTAND.

9'x12'x4'6"

computerized headline strip,
rubber, aluminum, lexan

DESIGNS FOR CITY NEWSSTANDS

Dan Graham/Billie Tsien & Tod Williams

Private enterprise must accept some responsibility for social conditions. Our concept for a prototypical newsstand attempts to bind together private and public interest by cojoining a newsstand with a bus stop.

As a private business occupying public sidewalk space, the newsstand should return a service back to the public. Thus, half of the space it occupies is designed as public shelter. The canopy providing protection from the elements and continuous illumination, the location maps, and even the fold down seating make this an amenity which may be used even when the newsstand is closed. By locating the newsstand at a bus stop a symbiotic relationship is established. Shelter is traded for a steady stream of prospective customers. It is a fair trade, avoiding the so called "benevolence" of public plazas.

The newsstand/bus stop is constructed of mechanically fastened anodized aluminum, and thus may be assembled by a relatively unskilled crew. The canopy, lit from above, is translucent. The wall panel system slides on tracks to allow cleaning of glass and access to the selling space. The panels are two way mirror glass. This glass reflects adjacent shop windows and doubles the animation of street and sidewalk. The panels simultaneously reflect the spectator's gaze, the proprietor's presence, the newspapers and objects for sale and passing traffic. The properties of a two way mirror glass render the side receiving more light as reflective, while the opposite side becomes transparent. The visual presence of the newsstand/ bus stop is in continual flux with the shifting movement of clouds, sun, and (with darkness) artificial light.

Two elements of the street, each with different and separate visual physical and operational demands have been united.

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GRAHAM/TSIEN/Williams

Program

The newsstand operator is an entrepreneur.
All manner of materials might be sold.

Objective:

- ° To give a sense of order to a situation that is in continuous flux.
- ° To suggest that more than one person might operate the stand at any time.
- ° To provide efficient and condensed storage space with a maximum of expanded selling space.

Site

The newsstand is a prototype.
It tries to address many conditions.
As public street furniture occupying sidewalk space it has certain responsibilities. Open or closed it must provide shelter and public amenity as well as private enterprise.

Prototype:

- ° Designed to present a visually active face curbside (i.e. to the street and across the street - with mirrored glass).
- ° Continues to function as a lighted shelter when the newsstand is closed by basic lighting provided by the city and by public service i.e. signs and seating.
- ° Functions in a potential double mode as both a newsstand and bus stop (providing a symbiotic relationship).
- ° Variations can provide shelter exiting from subways.
- ° Contains site specific information such as a map of its location and the vicinity etched into the side panels and/or information about bus routes.



Form

The newsstand must have a public and identifiable image.

Form:

- ° Dominated by a large translucent roof which allows light to enter and creates an identifying glow of light at night (with references to Hector Guimard and his entrances to the Paris Metro).
- ° Supported by three fins, two of which hold clear wire glass sliding panels for entrance or expansion of sales area. This provides a thin profile to the sidewalk, a wide face to the street.
- ° Able to accommodate several "satellite" business by drop down seating located at each end panel.
- ° Made solid and closed by a metal roll down door.
- ° Made transparent or reflective by changes in ambient lighting. When open interior lighting will create a transparent glass box which will display all materials and personalized signs. When closed-the lack of interior lighting will turn the newsstand into a mirrored box shielding view of the interior by reflecting all activity passing by.

Materials

The newsstand is conceived in metal and glass.

anodized aluminum
mirrored wire glass (mirrored lexan as alternate)
clear wire glass
plywood shelves and storage units
structural aluminum
transparent wired glass canopy

① INSERT DAN GRAHAM POINTS #1 and #2 AT THIS POINT





Tod Williams Billie Tsien
& Associates
Designs for City Newsstands
Maquettes
A project of the Public Art Fund



Photo courtesy of design team

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TOD WILLIAMS BILLIE TSIENT AND ASSOCIATES
222 CENTRAL PARK SOUTH, NEW YORK CITY 10019



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Inc.**

Tod Williams Billie Tsien
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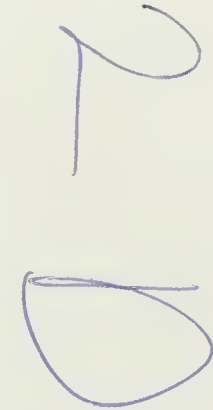


Photo courtesy of design team



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DESIGNS FOR CITY NEWSSTANDS

Patsy Norvell/Frances Halsband

In approaching this project, our primary interests and aims were to design a newsstand that would be flexible, affordable, secure and successful aesthetically. It needed to be able to satisfy the requirements of a variety of sites and to respond to the needs and budgets of the individual operators, while staying within the guidelines set by the City of New York.

The resulting modular design for the newsstand allows for flexibility, not only of size and layout, but also of materials and budgets. Constructed on a mill-finished painted steel frame, the newsstand has a prefinished metal roof and modular wall panels. The panels, which may be hinged or fixed, accept an infill of steel lattice or of expanded steel mesh. This security lattice can be backed with a variety of materials, including acrylic glazing, painted plywood (for a modest budget), or synthetic stone (for a more generous budget). These infill options allow the panels to function as walls, windows, or display panels for magazines and other merchandise. Vines may be grown on the steel lattice.

The entire structure is to be fabricated off site, with the interior shelving for storage and display custom fitted for the individual owner.

The size of the newsstand can vary from a small stand of 4'-0" x 5'-8 1/2 ", up to a maximum of 4' x 12'. Our preference, the version presented in the construction drawings and model, has a 4'-2" x 11'-6" roof covering an enclosed 4' x 5'-8 1/2" booth with a 4' x 5'-5 1/2" "porch" annex. In its opened form, the two security panels from the interior wall swing out to form part of a display wall for the annex. Two front panels fold back, opening the front of the booth for sales. Additional panels, stored in the booth, completes the porch annex as a protected additional sales alcove.

Designers:	Patsy Norvell (artist) with Frances Halsband (architect)
Architects:	R.M. Kliment & Frances Halsband
Project Team:	Patsy Norvell, Frances Halsband FAIA, Allan Jim, Kendall McAdams
Structural Eng's:	Robert Silman Associates

A project of the Public Art Fund Inc., New York City.

This project was made possible by generous grants from the J.M. Kaplan Fund and the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

R.M.Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects

Newsstand for New York City
Public Art Fund
6 November 1989

Newsstands in New York have been a natural subject of civic controversy for many decades. Location is the primary topic of dispute between the independent businessmen who own and operate the newsstands and concerned citizens (A busy Midtown intersection is the best of locations and the worst of locations). Of secondary concern to the operators are the functional aspects of the newsstand: how well merchandise can be displayed and how comfortable the operator will be during bad weather, and how security is to be maintained both when the newsstand is open and when it is locked for the night. Of secondary concern to the community are the esthetics of the newsstand both open and closed. The typical newsstand is, by acclamation, a convenient eyesore. These concerns have often been addressed by developers and architects who build handsome newsstands to "go with" their buildings and then lease them to operators. These structures are not often suggestive of a general solution to the larger problem of the typical newsstand, the construction of which must be financed by its operator. The Public Art Fund aims to raise the standard of newsstand construction in New York by making available to independent operators affordable designs created by three artist/architect teams and pre-approved by the City.

The team of Patsy Norvell (artist) and Frances Halsband (architect) and R.M.Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects approached the problem neither as Art nor as Architecture, but as urban design and as building. The ubiquity and anonymity of the newsstand were to be accepted in the development of a replicable type. Responsible budget constraints were to be respected in the development of a real solution to a legitimate problem.

The newsstand is built of a mill-finished painted steel frame with a prefinished metal roof structure and modular wall panels. These panels, which may be hinged or fixed, accept an infill of expanded steel mesh or a larger scaled steel lattice reminiscent of garden structures. These secure lattice panels can be backed with a variety of materials, including painted plywood, synthetic stone, or acrylic glazing. These infill options allow panels to function as walls, window, or display panels for magazine covers. It is intended that the structure be fabricated off-site by competing local manufacturers, who will produce the basic structure in small quantities and install panels in various configurations to order. This proposed structure responds as follows to both the primary issue of location and to the secondary issues of commodity, firmness and delight.





PUBLIC ART FUND

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R.M.Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects

255 West 26 Street
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Newsstand for Public Art Fund
Designed by Patsy Norvell & Frances Halsband

Photograph by Kliment & Halsband
September 1988

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